



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Family and Public Engagement

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New School Advisory Board Guidelines

Version 02

DRAFT

PLACEHOLDER: NEW MESSAGE FROM CHANCELLOR, OR FROM CHANCELLOR AND GEORGE . .

DRAFT

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Administrative Rules

- What is the primary purpose of the LSRT? What should you do to get started?
- How many people are on the team? What are the terms of members?
- All these questions, and more are answered in the Rules.

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- To ensure compliance with the rules, each school must complete the Certification of Elections form and the Team Membership form. This section provides the information you need

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- If your local school restructuring team wishes to apply/ or a ruler or Directive, you must provide the Governance Committee with the necessary information to process your request.

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- Each school must have a plan. This plan shall be developed by the local school restructuring team and contain the basic planning elements delineated in this section.

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1. What is a [school advisory board]?

A [School Advisory Board] is a body that exists in every school. It is made up of the parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and in some cases students, to advise the principal on matters essential to high expectations and high achievement for all students. The first advisory boards of this kind were called Local School Restructuring Teams; they were established by the Superintendent of DC Public Schools in consultation with the Washington Teachers Union in 1992. These teams were established, as the initial guidelines stipulated, “. . . to serve in an advisory capacity to the principal for the purpose of improving student outcomes.” DCPS students need the benefit of the work of the advisory board at their schools.

Since 1992, however, there have been many changes within DC Public Schools as well as in the federal laws that govern education. The project to rethink and update these guidelines was undertaken in response to requests from many LSRT members and principals across the city for clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the LSRT. The process culminating in new guidelines along with clear expectations and accountability for principals and LSRT members alike has included comprehensive community engagement with parents and teachers across the city, discussion with the Governance Committee as well as consultation between DCPS and the WTU. They reflect the wisdom and direction culled from those sources.

2. The Purpose Of [A School Advisory Board]

Every District of Columbia public school must have a functioning [school advisory board] that is constituted according to these guidelines and that conducts the business outlined herein. The [school advisory board] is each school's foremost advisory board. At this writing, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires that each Title 1 school have a School Improvement Team. The [school advisory boards] in DCPS Title 1 schools will serve as their school's School Improvement Teams. This has been deemed acceptable and in compliance with ESEA law by the DCPS Office of Federal Grants and Programs.

The [SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD] has primary responsibility for following:

- developing the Comprehensive School Plan, including the supporting budget;

- reviewing data in order to be informed about school needs and trends;
- monitoring and assessing the implementation of the school plan, and
- using assessment results to develop specific strategies for school improvement.

In the context of carrying out this responsibility—all directed at improving student achievement--
[school advisory boards] may discuss and advise the principal on matters such as:

- allocation of school resources;
- organization of the school;
- curriculum options, including special or supplementary course offerings and specialized research-based instructional strategies;
- budget decisions;
- priorities and considerations for staffing patterns and the selection of personnel, and
- monitoring student progress

3. Members Of A [School Advisory Board], And The Roles Of Those Members

Members. Every [school advisory board] has thirteen (13) members representing the following constituencies:

- 1 Building Representative (WTU) or designee
- 4 Teachers
- 4 Parents (who have children currently in the school)
- 1 Parent Group Leader or designee (who has children currently in the school)
- 1 Non-Instructional School Staff Member
- 1 Student (in high schools, and optional at other levels)
- 1 Community member

Up to two additional members may be named when, as happens in some cases, the above composition may not adequately represent the school community in full. If all members of the school advisory board and the principal agree that an additional member would be essential, they may request this from the DCPS Office of Family and Public Engagement. Possible requests could be to add a parent place in order to ensure language diversity that reflects the school's diversity, or adding a place for the parent of a

student in the incoming, youngest class, to be chosen at the beginning of the school year. The maximum number of possible members on a [school advisory board] is fifteen (15).

Roles. All [school advisory board] members represent groups with interests larger than their own individual ones. For the purpose of the advisory board, for example, teachers represent the concerns, ideas and opinions of *all teachers* in the school and parents represent the concerns, ideas and opinions of *all parents* in the school. Effective school advisory board members engage in regular outreach to those whom they represent.

Effective [school advisory board] members also are focused on student achievement. They work with the principal and central office in professional development sessions to understand data, current challenges, and multiple perspectives in order to better understand the needs of the school.

School Advisory Board Chair. The school advisory board chair is elected by the board from among its members, and leads the board. She or he must be the parent of a current student, or a current teacher. The Chair is the primary liaison to the principal and the advisory board's point of contact for the principal. The Chair:

- works with the principal on logistics, meeting planning, and agenda development;
- encourages other members to attain the knowledge necessary to participate meaningfully. This may include identifying external resources or distributing information on relevant DCPS professional development sessions;
- serves as liaison between the [school advisory board] and DCPS central office, specifically the Office of Family and Public Engagement, distributing key information from central office as well as asking questions or voicing concerns to central office;
- participates in mandatory meetings and professional development sessions for chairs and members.

The School Advisory Board Secretary. The secretary is elected by the [board]. The secretary takes notes during meetings. These notes are posted on the web and emailed to the team members within a week of every meeting to ensure accuracy and transparency. While confidential

information must be omitted at the discretion of the principal, the notes will reflect the discussion accurately. The position of secretary may rotate throughout the year if no member wishes to take on the responsibility for a full term.

4. Election Of Members

Elections for [school advisory boards] are held annually, sometime between May 1 and the last day of school. Terms shall begin July 1st and end on June 30th of the following year.

Members serve one year terms. Terms shall begin July 1st and end on June 30th of the following year.

[School Advisory Boards] are encouraged to begin thinking in terms of two-year, staggered terms in the future to ensure the carry-forward of knowledge and experience.

Members, except the community representative, are elected by secret ballot of the group they represent. The community representative is appointed to the school advisory board through a consensus of its members.

Procedures for Election:

Teacher Representatives

- All ET-15/EG09 personnel employed at the school, and included under the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) bargaining unit, are eligible to vote for and run as teacher representatives on the school advisory board.
- The Building Representative at each school conducts the election of ET-15/EG09.

Parent Representatives

- The president of the school parent organization conducts the election of all parent representatives. The president of the local parent organization shall provide sufficient notice of procedures for the nomination and election of parent representatives to all parents who have children enrolled in the school.
- Only parents, custodial parents, or guardians of children currently enrolled in the school are eligible to vote in the election and serve as a parent representative. Membership in

the school parent organization is not required in order for a parent to serve on the [school advisory board].

Non-Instructional School Staff Representative

- The principal will facilitate a meeting of the non-instructional staff for the purpose of electing the staff representative. All non-instructional staff assigned to the building are eligible to vote and to serve as the support staff representative.

Student Representative

- If there is an elected student government president in the high school, she or he will serve as the representative on the [school advisory board].

In schools where the WTU building representative has not been elected by April 30th, teachers may elect one (1) additional teacher to serve on the [school advisory board] in lieu of a WTU building representative or until such time as a WTU building representative has been elected.

The constituent groups of each [school advisory board] will establish procedures for filling vacancies which occur.

After elections have taken place and all members identified, contact information for all [school advisory board] members must be submitted to the DCPS Office of Family and Public Engagement as part of the principal's school year close out work and in order to certify the [school advisory board] election.

5. Role Of The Principal

The principal is not a member of the [school advisory board] itself but, as principal, is a person essential to the [school advisory board]'s work. Since the purpose of the [school advisory board] is to advise the principal, the inclusion of her or him as a member of the [school advisory board] puts a principal in the odd position of being part of a group that advises one's self. Principals or their designees must play essential roles in school advisory boards in terms of participation, responsive listening, and respectful dialogue. Principals will be held accountable to the Chancellor for successful execution of this role.

The principal or her/his designee attends all school advisory board meetings. The principal is expected to use the school advisory board authentically and regularly (once a quarter at minimum) as a think tank or

sounding board on topics significant in the Comprehensive School Plan and in the life of the school.

While the principal is not required to follow recommendations from the school advisory board, she or he is required to engage members in rich and meaningful discussion. The principal:

- works with the Chair on logistics, meeting planning and agenda creation;
- ensures elections are held during the election window;
- facilitates the use of necessary resources for outreach efforts;
- ensures all parents feel welcome to participate on the [school advisory board];
- listens well and respectfully, and promotes an atmosphere of responsible, student-focused dialogue.

6. Place Of Consensus In The Work Of A [School Advisory Board]

[School advisory boards] should strive for consensus in all matters. Driving to consensus is a strong foundation for the kind of active, focused discussion in which every [school advisory board] should be engaged. There may be times, however, when consensus cannot be reached. In those cases, the principal will benefit from two diverse points of view. These differences in opinion are no less helpful to the principal than a single opinion. Presenting and discussing diverse points of view in this way mirrors existing organizational structures like the U.S. Supreme Court in which majority and minority opinions plainly and openly co-exist.

7. [School Advisory Board] Meetings

[School advisory board] meets to review data, assess needs, work on the Comprehensive School Plan, and work on the school budget.

At minimum, the [school advisory board] meets at least four times a year. Meetings will be scheduled so that as many members as possible can attend. Parents are given preference in deciding meeting times to ensure that meeting times do not overlap with work hours.

A majority of the members of the [school advisory board], which shall include the principal or officer designee and the building representative or designee and a least one (1) parent representative, constitutes a quorum.

The Chair has the responsibility to set a meeting agenda in consultation with the membership and the principal. The Chair provides notice of meetings to all members and to the larger school community.

The Secretary keeps minutes of each meeting and will distribute minutes within a week after each meeting. Meeting notes shall be approved by board members quickly, then posted on www.dcps.dc.gov and in the front office of every school within a week of each meeting. Minutes may also be posted on the school's website and distributed via school newsletter or other means that the [school advisory board] sees fit.

Minutes will include a general overview of issues discussed during the meeting including difficult or contentious ones. Confidential information shall not be included.

8. Essential Elements Of Trust And Confidentiality

From time to time, [school advisory boards] are asked to discuss topics that are sensitive and confidential. The principal will set clear expectations at these junctures, and explicitly inform board members when discussion topics are not appropriate to share, and must be kept confidential. Board members must abide by the principal's judgment. In cases where [school advisory boards] include high school students, there may be additional sensitivity around certain topics.

Sound judgment and respect for those who may be impacted by decisions being discussed are imperative for all board members. Moreover, the principal may choose to keep certain kinds of information confidential and apart from advisory board discussions. Such decisions are at the discretion of the principal.

9. Transparency Of [School Advisory Board] Meetings And Meeting Minutes

With the exception of matters like those described in Section 8, all [school advisory board] meetings are open for observation, and all minutes will be posted within a week of the date the meeting takes place.

10. The Role Of DCPS Central Office

School Advisory Boards are the responsibility of each school, and of the DCPS Office of Family and Public Engagement.

Oversight

The Office of Family and Public Engagement (OFPE), working with other DCPS offices as necessary, will provide orientation and on-going professional development to all school advisory board members and to principals. These sessions will include an overview of new guidelines, expectations and upcoming events. These sessions will be mandatory.

In turn, school advisory boards should request professional development and other kinds of training from OFPE on specific topics as needed. Using and understanding data, an overview of assessment practices, and creating and monitoring a school plan are examples of such topics.

In order to promote collaboration and exchange of information and best practices among school advisory boards and their respective school communities, OFPE will:

- maintain a web presence that encourages the exchange of information among advisory boards
- maintain a list of all [school advisory board] chairs, including their contact information, to distribute to all chairs and members to encourage collaboration
- host an annual meeting or conference for school advisory board chairs, members, and principals

OFPE will collect and maintain contact information for all [school advisory boards] members. Questions concerning the interpretation of these guidelines and/or questions on specific topics not covered within the guidelines should be addressed to the Office of Family and Public Engagement at xxxxx@dc.gov. In the event a member is unable to participate productively on a [school advisory board], and all other

strategies have been exhausted, the Office of Family and Public Engagement reserves the right to request that the principal remove the member from the [board].

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is will include, but is not limited to, the following members and representatives, and will meet twice yearly to review the guidelines, recommend improvements, and determine appropriate evaluation procedures:

Chancellor or designee

4 Parents	Appointed by Chancellor
4 WTU Members (must include 2 teachers)	Appointed by WTU
2 CSO Members	Appointed by Council of School Officers
2 Principals	Appointed by Chancellor
1 Instructional Superintendent	Appointed by Chancellor
2 Community Members	Appointed by Chancellor